

the GAY MILITANTS

DONN TEAL



STEIN AND DAY/*Publishers*/New York

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is a book by so many gay militants, as well as old-line homophile leaders, that a comprehensive "thanks" will be difficult. Nevertheless:

The author and the women who collaborated on Chapter 9 wish first to express our appreciation to the gay press—especially to GAY, *The Advocate*, *Come Out!*, *Gay Power*, *Gay Flames*, *Gay Sunshine*, *Gay Scene*, the *San Francisco Free Press* (succeeded today by the *San Francisco Gay Free Press*), and QQ magazine—as well as to several homophile newsletters and magazines, including *Vector* and *The Ladder: A Lesbian Review*. Gratitude is due also to the many underground newspapers that have carried news of the gay revolution.

The following gays and straights—an incomplete list at best—merit many thanks, their encouragement and aid having made the book possible:

Sidney Abbott	Foster Gunnison, Jr.	Marty Nixon
Breck Ardery	Gerald Hansen	Jack Nichols
Susie Arensberg	John Heys	Charles Pitts
Tom Ashe	Jerry Hoose	Mike Randall
Richy Aunateau	Steve Ihrig	Marty Robinson
Jack Baker	Michael Itkin	Craig Rodwell
Arthur Bell	Don Jackson	Nathalie Rockhill
Lee Brewster	Franklin Kameny	Marc Rubin
Ken Burdick	Arnie Kantrowitz	Don Rundquist
Angus Cameron	Jim Kepner	Craig Schoonmaker
Madolin Cervantes	John Knoebel	Mark Segal
Jim Clifford	Bob Kohler	Jack Stafford
Ann Close	Michael Kotis	Charles Thorp
Louis Crompton	Steve Kuromiya	Kay Tobin
George Desantis	Barbara Love	Gerald Walker
Tom Doerr	Pat Maxwell	Bill Weaver
Angela Douglas (Key)	Gale McGovern	Henry Wiemhoff
Tommy Dutton	George Mendenhall	Sophie Wilkins
Earl Galvin	Dick Michaels	Pete Wilson
Barbara Gittings	Guy Nassberg	Allen Young

The encouragement of my editor, George Caldwell, at Stein and Day has, needless to say, been invaluable.

The most especial thanks must go to the members of Gay Liberation Front New York and Gay Activists Alliance, who brought the book to life . . .
New York, January 1971

D.T.

health; to love and to cherish in the sight of God: and thereto I pledge thee my word. . . .

René Guyon: "The trouble to which the psychiatrists have gone to explain . . . nature in terms of convention, health in terms of mental disease, is scarcely to be believed. . . . The distinctive method of its system is that every time it comes across a natural act that is contrary to the prevailing conventions, it brands this act as a symptom of mental derangement or abnormality."⁴³

Thomas Szasz: "In stubbornly insisting that the homosexual is sick, the psychiatrist is merely pleading to be accepted as a physician. . . . [W]e may safely conclude that psychiatric opinion about homosexuals is not a scientific proposition but a medical prejudice. . . . It is clear that psychiatrists have a vested interest in diagnosing as mentally ill as many people as possible, just as inquisitors had in branding them as heretics. The "conscientious" psychiatrist authenticates himself as a competent medical man by holding that sexual deviants (and all kinds of other people, perhaps all of mankind, as Karl Menninger would have it) are mentally ill, just as the "conscientious" inquisitor authenticated himself as a faithful Christian by holding that homosexuals (and all kinds of other people) were heretics. We must realize that in situations of this kind we are confronted, not with scientific problems to be solved, but with social roles to be confirmed. Inquisitor and witch, psychiatrist and mental patient, create each other and authenticate each other's roles. For an inquisitor to have maintained that witches were not heretics and that their souls required no special effort at salvation would have amounted to asserting that there was no need for witchhunters."⁴⁴ . . .

On May 14, 1970, psychiatrists became the hunted. An invasion by a coalition of gay and women's liberationists interrupted the national convention of the American Psychiatric Association in San Francisco "to protest the reading of a paper by an Australian psychiatrist on the subject of 'aversion therapy,' a system of treatment which attempts to change gay orientation by keying unpleasant sensations (such as electric shocks) to homosexual stimuli.* By the time the meeting was over, the feminists and their gay cohorts were in charge . . . and the doctors were heckling from the audience."⁴⁵

GAY called it A MUCH NEEDED ZAP, and editorialized: "Homosexually

* Don Jackson reported in *Gay Power* (No. 19) that the treatment consists ["According to Dr. Kay Thomas"] of showing the patient nude, provocative photographs of handsome men. An electric shock is administered with each photo. In the nauseous drug therapy, the patient is sexually aroused by a man, and then forced to take a nauseous drug. 'It is nothing new,' said Dr. Thomas. 'It is just Pavlovian conditioning—you might call it brain washing. It does work in many cases, but it would be equally effective if it were used to cure heterosexuality.'"

inclined people have much to fear from the entrenched dogma of today's psychiatric establishment. We cannot stand idly by while so-called 'scientists' prepare the groundwork for electric shock treatments. To do so would be to masochistically assist evil headhunting shrinks to bring *Brave New World* closer than ever." 46

Californian Gary Alinder told *Come Out!*: 47 "Walking into the enemy's inner sanctum is an enlightening experience. . . . We found out how tuned out the shrinks are." He described the main convention meeting as "a refugee camp for Nixon's silent majority. It was 99 and 44/100 per cent white, straight, male middle-aged, upper middle class. . . . They have no qualms about male chauvinism, they've never even thought about it." Alinder noted that their agenda was to feature ". . . a panel about American Indians which concentrates on suicide by them rather than genocide by us . . . learning about aversion treatment for homosexuals—but not considering whether homosexuality is really a psychiatric 'disease' . . . hearing about drugs, new drugs and old drugs—but not the way drugs are used to tranquilize people who are legitimately upset . . . hearing about psychiatry and law enforcement but not about how our society uses police to oppress people and prevent change . . . discussing sexuality and abortion—but not the way sex roles are used to oppress women."

GAY detailed the gays' takeover: 48

Dr. Nathaniel McConaghy of the University of New South Wales had come all the way from Australia to deliver his paper, and when the protesters started booing, he pleaded with them for a hearing.

Ironically, McConaghy is of the school which does not regard homosexuality as a mental aberration, and he told the demonstrators so. "This paper is the result of six years' work," he said. "Let me have my half-hour to report on it."

One woman leaped to the stage and demanded to use the microphone. Without identifying herself, she lashed out against McConaghy's paper.

"There is an alternative to this horrible, barbaric, disgusting, sadistic technique," she said. "That is, that people who are upset about something get together and talk about their problems among themselves."

[Alinder] . . . "I want to know what room the women can have to meet together in, and I want to know now." The chairman went on to the next speaker. Another woman got on the microphone: "I don't believe you heard, we want to know what room we can have and we want to know now."

[GAY] . . . Shouts and boos . . . from the front rows, which the demonstrators had largely taken over, and from further back came shouts of counter-protest.

"Shut up," cried a psychiatrist near the front of the hall, and others joined in with ill-concealed hostility: "Get out," "Be quiet," "We don't want to hear you."

One man dressed as a priest [the Rt. Rev. Michael Itkin] . . . protested

against "oppression," which, he said, "has been going on for five fucking thousand years."

Konstantin Berlandt, of Berkeley GLF, paraded through the hall in a bright red dress. Paper airplanes sailed down from the balcony. With two papers still unread, the chairman announced adjournment.

GAY told, "A slim young man in tight white jeans with shirt open to the navel leaped to the podium and shouted, 'The liberated meeting of the American Psychiatric Association is now in session.' This time it was the doctors who were the hecklers, several of whom engaged in a furious shouting contest with a Women's Lib member trying to get the floor. 'Don't shake your fucking finger at me,' the woman shrieked. 'I'll shake whatever I please,' retorted one doctor, his face livid."

[Alinder] . . . We are in a room of enraged psychiatrists. "They should be killed," shouts one. "Give back our air fare," shouts another.

Maria DeSantos reads from a Women's Liberation statement: "Women come to you suffering from depression. Women ought to feel depressed with the roles society puts on them. . . . Those roles aren't biological, those roles are learned. . . . It started when my mother threw me a doll and my brother a ball. . . ."

Michael Itkin reads the Gay Liberation demands.* . . . Knots of people talking loudly all over the room. Shrinks coming up asking us what we want. . . .

[GAY] . . . One girl spoke to her part of the floor about the passes made at her under the guise of psychiatric examination. Another accused Dr. Leo Alexander of Boston, one of the most eminent psychiatrists today, of assaulting her, and he stormed the stage to protest the injustice of her charge . . .

Alinder wrote that he found Dr. Irving Bieber, Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College, in a later convention panel entitled "Transsexualism v. Homosexuality: Distinct Entities?" and blasted the New Yorker:

"You are the pigs who make it possible for the cops to beat homosexuals: they call us queer; you—so politely—call us sick. But it's the same thing. You make possible the beatings and rapes in prisons,** you are implicated in the torturous cures perpetrated on desperate homosexuals. I've read your book,***

* Alinder reported that "One of Gay Liberation's demands to the convention was the abolition of psychiatry as an oppressive tool."

** Randy Wicker noted, in GAY (December 4, 1970), how "Five prisoners at the Queens House of Detention have been indicted on charges of first degree sodomy for forcing homosexual inmates into sexual acts during the takeover of the jail during early October. . . . Four homosexual prisoners were forced to engage in sexual acts with one another while the inmates looked on, and then were attacked by the five and sexually abused."

*** Irving Bieber *et al.*: *Homosexuality* (New York, 1962).

Dr. Bieber, and if that book talked about Black people the way it talks about homosexuals, you'd be drawn and quartered and you'd deserve it."

Bieber answers: "I never said homosexuals were sick, what I said was that they have displaced sexual adjustment." Much laughter from us: "That's the same thing, motherfucker." He tries again, "I don't want to oppress homosexuals; I want to liberate them, to liberate them from that which is paining them—their homosexuality." That used to be called genocide. . . .

On June 23, eighteen women and men of Chicago Gay Liberation non-plused a workshop on "Family Medicine" at the national convention of the American Medical Association in the Midwestern capital. Dr. Charles Socarides, New York psychiatrist and Arch-Enemy Number Two of the American homosexual, was their prime target. Scattering themselves throughout the meeting hall, the gays waited until Socarides began to speak. "As soon as he said the word 'homosexual,'" wrote Step May of CGL, "one invader shouted 'homosexuals are beautiful' and ten others jumped up to distribute the prepared leaflet. We then settled back with our arms around each other to hear all about ourselves."

Time and again during his address, the gays challenged, "That's a moral judgment!" or "You're making things up!" or "Do you cure your straight patients of heterosexuality?" Socarides emphasized how physiologically adapted the male and female of the human species were to each other. A gay yelled, "A woman's breasts don't fit into a man's chest!" May told how,

After Socarides finished, one furious doctor demanded to know by what authority we were attending the session. Another doctor suggested that the issue that the Gay Liberation people were raising should be given legitimacy, and that one homosexual should join Socarides and the other authorities on the panel. A gay guerrilla raised the objection that there were women homosexuals and men homosexuals and that both groups would have to be represented. A gay woman and a gay man then took their places on the panel⁴⁹ . . .

New York *Mattachine* vice-president Bob Milne took his place, later that summer, on a panel discussion treating homosexuality, theology, and psychiatry at the State University of New York College of Nursing (Downstate Medical Center) in Brooklyn. Before an audience of nurses Milne and Father William Frederickson, a Catholic priest, crossed swords.

Father Frederickson spoke of two parishioners who were "sad men" and "laden with guilt." This was all Milne needed. "In the ensuing dialogue, [he] made clear that the parishioners in question did not suffer 'guilt' because of their homosexuality, but because they'd been *made* to feel guilty by 'The Vacuous Vatican, the Forever Fallible Fathers (vs. Galileo, Darwin, Freud, etc.), No-Fun Fundamentalists, Billy Bible-Bigot Grahams, and Rabid Rabbis.'"⁵⁰

The *Mattachine Times*⁵¹ affirmed how MSNY's

man marshalled and machine-gunned his facts: pointed out the popes who were practicing homosexuals; reviewed the history of homosexual prohibitions from Sodom in the Genesis myth (wherein the Jews promoted the practical purpose of procreating their persecuted and decimated race) to Henry VIII's incorporation into common law of ecclesiastical "sin"; revealed the fact that Jesus never once in line, chapter or verse condemned homosexuality; quoted Kinsey's statistics that proved clergymen have the highest homosexual percentage of any of the professions . . .

GAY detailed⁵² how the gay spokesman

then launched into the lexicon of psychology to illuminate the etiology of homosexuality, the genes, hormones, the ontogenetic and phylogenetic evolutionary evidence, the geographical, historical, the cross-cultural, cross-species proof of the basic bisexual nature of man. He concluded with a caustic technical critique of quack psychiatrists.

The Catholic priest clasped his hands prayerfully, but getting no reply turned to an instructress for a more pragmatic assist. "I'd hoped the (mission) psychiatrist would be here to help me out" . . .

Gay liberation had not finished with the psychiatrists. A few months later GAY revealed: LOS ANGELES GAYS INVADE PSYCHOLOGISTS CONFERENCE: "GUINEA PIGS" RISE UP IN PROTEST—an on-the spot report by Tony DeRosa of L.A. GLF. *The Advocate* proclaimed, PSYCHOLOGISTS GET GAY LIB "THERAPY."⁵³ To a lecture on aversion therapy at the 2nd Annual Behavioral Modification Conference, on October 17, went GLFers and other gays who had arranged with Dr. Albert Marston of the University of Southern California (one of the sponsors) Psychology Department "for anyone willing to identify himself as a homosexual or member of GLF to be admitted to the session without paying a \$10 fee." *The Advocate* related:

Some 140 persons were watching a film being shown by British psychologist Dr. M. Phillip Feldman of the University of Birmingham when GLF activists in the audience raised shouts of "Barbarism!" "Medieval torture!" and "This is disgusting!"

Lights were turned up and nearly a third of the audience, led by October GLF chairman Tony DeRosa, Don Kilhefner, Morris Kight, and Steve Beckwith, marched to the stage in the Music Room of the Biltmore Hotel. . . .

"I had hoped we could get through with Dr. Feldman's film and presentation and open some dialogue and discussion," Dr. Marston told the audience and the demonstrators.

"How can you have dialogue when you've got us up here as a show?" Beckwith objected.

Up to this point, there had been little reaction from the rest of the audience—many, but not all of them, practicing psychologists.

There was a brief exchange between Kight and Dr. Feldman, with Kight

describing the aversion techniques worked out by Dr. Feldman in research with homosexual males between 1962 and 1966 as "primitive medieval torture." In the first part of his lecture, before the film, Dr. Feldman had stressed the ethical responsibility involved in using such techniques and had said that they were used only on homosexuals who had sought help and whom the researchers had been convinced genuinely wanted to change.

"I do not serve as the agent of society. I'm not here, either in America or in England, to do society's bidding. I'm here to help people who ask for this.

"This means we didn't keep in treatment any patients who were referred by the law or by the courts. I thought this was totally wrong. If it became clear early in treatment that they didn't want to change, we let them out through the back door. I can say this here, I couldn't say it in England."

Kight, however, took the tack that the very existence of such techniques was a threat.

"Gentlemen, and ladies, you are a party to this. You must be responsible . . . With this kind of treatment, you could make a Tory, you could also make a Nazi, you could also make any number of things."

Dr. Feldman protested that in the interrupted film, "I make just this point."

"Then, sir, Dr. Feldman, you should not have allowed this. You should have said to homosexuals, 'So what?'"

Kilhefner took over the microphone and said, "I'm a firm believer in free speech. But what you people out there call free speech, in fact has been a monologue for over a half century. And we would like to start a dialogue."

He said the GLF would print Dr. Feldman's speech at its own expense for those who wanted to read it later, "but right now the GLF is suggesting . . . that this session this morning be reconstituted. That if a dialogue is to begin, let it begin now. You have been our oppressor for too long, and we will take this no longer.

"We are going to reconstitute this session into small groups," he said, "with equal numbers of GLF members and members of your profession, and we are going to talk this morning—talk as you have probably never talked with homosexuals before, as equals. We're going to talk about such things as homosexuality as an alternative life style."

Kilhefner was interrupted by protests from the audience and the session rapidly turned into a shouting match. Kilhefner had the advantage of the microphone and continued to make himself heard above the uproar.

"We paid money to come here and listen to Dr. Feldman," one man shouted.

"If you believe in free speech, why don't you practice it?" a woman psychologist challenged the demonstrators.

Kilhefner plowed on, ignoring the protests.

"We're going to be talking about what you as psychologists are going to do to clear up your own fucked minds."

"I'm not a psychologist," a young Black in the audience yelled.

"This is what we're going to be doing, baby," Kilhefner kept on. Anybody who "can't dig it, we ask you to leave," he said. "Is this straight?"

"We ask you to leave," a man said loudly. "Yeah," a woman shouted, triggering applause.

"Sorry, buddy . . ." Kilhefner began. He was almost drowned out in a rising storm of boos, protests, and handclapping. Through it he kept shouting, "No more, baby, no more, baby!"

Some members of the audience got up and left. Others drifted in from the corridors to see what was going on. Kilhefner eventually gave up the microphone and several other GLF members attempted to speak.

Finally, Kight came forward and attempted to chide the audience for reacting angrily to the invasion. "Is this any tribute to your professionalism . . . You have a rare opportunity to talk to homosexuals who are terribly proud of it."

Dr. Marston spoke up at this point to say, "I think most of the people attending the regular conference agreed with me that we would, in fact, like to talk to members of the GLF. Our position is, that in order for the points to be made by the GLF, particularly for a lot of the audience who knew little about homosexuals, little about this treatment that you feel is so terrible, and do not know the issues, that it would be very valuable for them to see the rest of the film and hear what Dr. Feldman has to say."

This set off shouts of protest by the Gay Libers.

"We are here fighting for our lives," said Lee Heflin, pushing in to take the microphone. "This is the same situation that happened in Nazi Germany. You wonder why we are here with hostility. You are wanting to burn our brains out because you don't like the way we live."

After several minutes, Dr. Marston managed to get the microphone back.

"The professionals in the room are, for the most part, very sympathetic towards the GLF, and are mainly concerned with tactics. I don't want to close the ears of the people in this room who can be helpful, who can go out in the general public and be of great service to the GLF. And this is the only reason that I ask that you agree to their conditions for this dialogue and simply wait probably no more than a half hour or 45 minutes to hear the end of Dr. Feldman's film."

The argument went back and forth for several minutes more. GLFer Ralph Shafer said, "Ever since I was five years old, I've been reading books about homosexuality written by psychologists and psychiatrists, and I've been seeing films . . . and we're sick and tired of it . . . Now we want to be treated like human beings."

This got applause from the demonstrators and from many in the audience. But the audience as a whole was not won over and the uproar went on.

Kight took the mike to say he understood the police had been called, and asked in wondering tones, "You're proud of the fact that you have called police on people who want to talk? You believe in that? All of you who approve of the police being here, applaud."

A wave of applause came from the audience.

"You're nothing but a living martyr," yelled a young woman who later identified herself as Cheryl A. Bartlett, a therapist at Fairview State Hospital in Costa Mesa. Kight protested, but she kept on.

"You are a living martyr to what you think is right . . . Listen, buddy, when Dr. Feldman came in here, he said we're going to be dealing with a situation on a voluntary basis. We want to deal with people who come to us

and say, 'I feel anxiety, I feel hostility, I feel tensions, because I am what I am, and I want to change.'

"You people are happy, go your way, God be with you."

Miss Bartlett's comments set off the loudest uproar of the session. Beckwith objected that if there were any homosexuals who felt anxiety, it was because of what society had done to them.

Dr. Feldman had left the hall hurriedly. DeRosa told GAY readers what followed: ⁵⁴

Dr. Marston: "There will be no arrests, there will be no arrests. We have reached a compromise. It is now 10 o'clock. Let us spend the next hour in small groups discussing this thing. At 11 o'clock we'll hear the rest of Dr. Feldman's presentation."

Applause. The audience reluctantly and nervously moves the neatly rowed chairs into loose circles.

"Can we still see the movie at 11?"

"Yeah, baby, yeah, baby."

The rap sessions go well. The behaviorists prove to be intelligent people and now seem truly interested in rapping with us. I wander from group to group and everyone seems deeply engaged in conversation. Some of the questions evoke automatic responses ("But you can't have *children*, and we can." "We don't *have* to have children, *you* will have our children for us. We're not a different species, we're all human beings. Creating children is part of your lifestyle, it is not part of ours. You will have gay children and you will have straight children, etc. etc. etc.") but most of the talk proves meaningful and constructive.

11 o'clock.

Morris Kight: "Ladies and gentlemen, thank you. That wasn't so bad, was it?" (Applause) "Now, 25,000 large meetings such as the one you have had here today happen in Los Angeles each year. Most of them come and go, and nobody but the families of those involved know that they came to Los Angeles. Now, you can't say that you came to Los Angeles and it wasn't noticed, because *we* noticed you—and the Associated Press and United Press noticed you, and this little episode that we had with you this morning is going out on the wires right now, and everybody in the country is being told that psychologists and homosexuals were *talking* together and we think that's news. I would like to thank, in the name of Gay Liberation Front, the kind people who had the good sense to send the police away. It would have been exceedingly inconvenient for us to have been in jail this weekend, but we were prepared to do so and had set up procedures to handle it should we have been arrested. We would, in turn, have charged you with disturbing our peace, as you have disturbed our peace for these many years. Because we cannot and will not allow it to be disturbed anymore. This is the unique thing that the Gay Liberation Front does. We no longer apologize because we have nothing to apologize for. When we say 'We're Gay and We're Proud,' we *mean* it. We *are* proud! Now, we do not say that heterosexuality

is wrong or evil. If you think that it is, get Dr. Feldman to cure you! Thank you, thank you again for coming to our consciousness raising sessions today!"

Don Kilhefner: "I don't think anybody need be deluded that now we'll just go away, that we've had our fun for the morning, because it isn't that type of revolution that we're engaged in right now. This is just the beginning and we'd like to make you aware of the fact that anytime any conference is being held where our lives and our people are being discussed, we are going to be there. Now, I encourage you, if you are involved in planning these future discussions, that you make an attempt to invite us. I guarantee that if you don't make an attempt to invite us, we will invite ourselves. This is just the beginning. You are going to see a lot more of us; you are going to hear a lot more of us. My only concern this morning is that you're all back in your nice little rows passively listening to somebody when you were actually talking and actively learning a short while ago."

Dr. Feldman returns. The overthrow of the session that morning has obviously shaken him. Militant homosexuals are not something he had bargained for. He decides to forego showing the rest of the film and settles instead for a series of mundane slides, filled with statistics and diagrams. Words like "improved" and "not completed" indicate clearly that his treatment is not a success. Dr. Feldman stumbles over words, stares at the slides for minutes without speaking and often seems unable to continue.

During the question and answer period which follows, Gay Liberation Front proves so strong that Dr. Feldman is soon reduced to mumbling "I don't know, I don't know."

In a speech to the assembly shortly after it reconvened, moderator Dr. Albert Marston said: "We have a responsibility for education. If, in fact, we are aware, sensitive professionals who know that homosexuality is not a sickness, who know that the homosexual life style is a legitimate alternate life-style, we have a responsibility not simply to know it and sit with our hands crossed, but to educate our fellow professionals and to educate the general public. We have to begin looking carefully at how we allocate our priorities and we have to consider whether we can do greater social good doing research on some aspects of homosexuality which we can learn from the Gay Liberation Front."

RIGHT ON!